

## ES 3.1

**PARENTAL LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION:  
PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WITH BOTH PARENTS  
OR ONLY RESIDENT PARENT IN THE LABOR FORCE**

Over the last three decades, the proportion of single-parent families has increased, as has the proportion of mothers who work regardless of marital status.<sup>30</sup> These factors have reduced the percentage of children who have a parent at home full time. Figure ES 3.1 presents data on the percentage of children who have all resident parents participating in the labor force<sup>31</sup> at some level for the years 1985, 1990, and 1994 through 1997.

**Parents in the Labor Force by Family Structure.** Between 1985 and 1997, the percentage of children who have all resident parents in the labor force increased from 59 percent to 68 percent (see Figure ES 3.1). Between 1990 and 1996, the percentage of children who have all resident parents participating in the labor force was similar for both married-couple families and single-mother families; however, the rate for single-mother families increased sharply from 66 percent in 1996 to 72 percent in 1997, while the rate for married-couple families increased only slightly. The rate for children in single-father families has remained much higher, at 88 percent.

**Parents in the Labor Force by Age of Child.** Children under age 6 have been less likely than older children to have all resident parents in the labor force (see Table ES 3.1). In 1997, 61 percent of younger children had all resident parents in the labor force, compared with 71 percent for older children.

**Parents in the Labor Force by Race and Hispanic Origin.** Between 1985 and 1990, white children, black children, and Hispanic children all became more likely to have all their resident parents in the labor force (see Table ES 3.1). Between 1990 and 1996, the rates stayed virtually the same for blacks and Hispanics, and increased modestly for whites; however, the rate for all three groups increased between 1996 and 1997, with especially large increases for blacks. Between 1996 and 1997 the rate for black children of all ages increased from 64 percent to 71 percent, and the rate for black children under age 6 increased from 58 percent to 68 percent. By 1997, 68 percent of white children, 71 percent of black children, and 54 percent of Hispanic children lived in families in which all resident parents were working.

<sup>30</sup>Bianchi, S.M. 1995. "Changing Economic Roles of Women and Men." In *State of the Union: America in the 1990s*, Volume 1 (Reynolds Farley, ed.). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

<sup>31</sup>Participating in the labor force means either working or actively seeking work.

Table ES 3.1

Percentage of children in the United States with both parents or only resident parent in the labor force, by age, family structure, and race and Hispanic origin:<sup>a</sup> selected years, 1985-1997

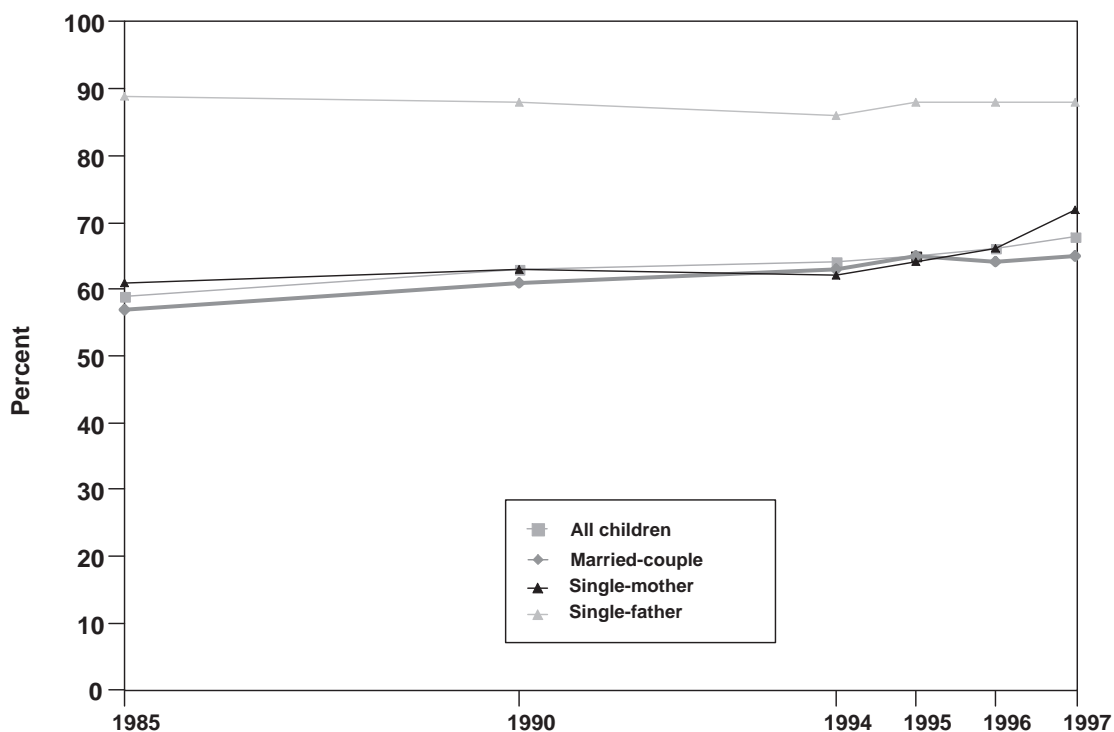
	1985	1990	1994	1995	1996	1997
<b>All children</b>	59	63	64	65	66	68
Under age 6	51	55	56	59	58	61
Ages 6-17	63	67	68	69	70	71
<b>Family structure</b>						
<b>Married-couple</b>	57	61	63	65	64	65
Under age 6	51	54	57	59	58	58
Ages 6-17	61	65	67	68	67	69
<b>Single-mother</b>	61	63	62	64	66	72
Under age 6	49	51	52	54	56	65
Ages 6-17	67	70	68	69	72	76
<b>Single-father</b>	89	88	86	88	88	88
Under age 6	90	90	85	86	86	89
Ages 6-17	89	88	86	88	89	88
<b>Race and Hispanic origin<sup>a</sup></b>						
<b>White</b>	59	63	64	66	66	68
Under age 6	51	55	57	59	58	61
Ages 6-17	63	67	68	70	70	71
<b>Black</b>	60	63	62	64	64	71
Under age 6	54	55	56	57	58	68
Ages 6-17	63	67	66	67	68	73
<b>Hispanic</b>	45	50	49	50	50	54
Under age 6	40	44	41	44	43	49
Ages 6-17	48	54	54	54	55	57

<sup>a</sup>Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Estimates for whites and blacks include persons of Hispanic origin.

Sources: 1985, 1990, 1994 and 1995 statistics calculated by Child Trends, Inc., based on the March 1985, 1990, 1994, and 1995 Current Population Surveys; 1996 and 1997 statistics calculated by the U.S. Bureau of the Census based on the 1996 and 1997 Current Population Surveys.

Figure ES 3.1

Percentage of children under age 18 in the United States with both parents or only resident parent in the labor force, by family structure: selected years, 1985-1997



Sources: 1985, 1990, 1994 and 1995 statistics calculated by Child Trends, Inc., based on the March 1985, 1990, 1994, and 1995 Current Population Surveys; 1996 and 1997 statistics calculated by the U.S. Bureau of the Census based on the 1996 and 1997 Current Population Surveys.

## ES 3.2

**MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT: PERCENTAGE OF MOTHERS WITH CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 WHO ARE EMPLOYED, FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME**

Over the last several decades, the increasing proportion of mothers moving into employment has had substantial consequences for the everyday lives of families with children. Maternal employment adds to the financial resources available to families, and is often the only source of income for families headed by single mothers--although if child-care services are purchased and unsubsidized, they may offset a substantial percentage of low-wage mothers' earnings.

Maternal employment rates for all mothers with children under age 18 increased steadily from 53 percent to 63 percent between 1980 and 1990 (see Figure ES 3.2.A). From 1990 to 1996, rates increased at a slower pace from 63 percent to 66 percent. This pattern of increasing maternal employment was evident for all mothers, regardless of the age of their children.

**Differences by Age of Child.** The percentage of mothers who are employed increases with the age of the youngest child for all time periods presented in Table ES 3.2.A. In 1996, 55 percent of mothers with children under age 3 were employed, compared with 63 percent and 74 percent for mothers with youngest children ages 3-5 and 6-17, respectively.

**Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin.** In 1996, 67 percent of white mothers, 63 percent of black mothers, and 49 percent of Hispanic mothers were employed (see Table ES 3.2.A). Black mothers were the most likely to be employed full-time (52 percent). All three groups substantially increased their rates of employment between 1980 and 1990; however, the rate of employment for Hispanic women has essentially remained unchanged since then. In contrast, the rate of employment for white women has continued to increase, while the rate of employment for black women has grown slightly.

**Differences by Marital Status.** Throughout the period between 1980 and 1996, divorced mothers had higher rates of employment than never-married or currently married mothers (see Table ES 3.2.A). Employment increased from 62 percent to 68 percent for married mothers, from 40 to 49 percent for never-married mothers, and from 75 to 79 percent for divorced mothers.

**Full-Time Versus Part-Time Employment.** Among all employed mothers, 71 percent were working full-time in 1996 (see Figure ES 3.2.B). Employed mothers with older children were more likely to work full-time than those with young children, with rates ranging from 66 percent for mothers with children under age 3, to 74 percent for mothers with a youngest child between the ages of 6 and 17. Divorced mothers were more likely to work full-time (84 percent) than never-married mothers (72 percent) and married mothers (68 percent). Black mothers who were employed were more likely to work full-time (83 percent) than white mothers (69 percent) or Hispanic mothers (76 percent).

Table ES 3.2.A

Percentage of mothers in the United States with children under age 18 who were employed, full- time and part-time<sup>a</sup>, by age of youngest child, marital status, and race and Hispanic origin:<sup>b</sup> selected years, 1980-1996

	1980 <sup>a</sup>	1988	1990	1994	1995	1996
<b>Total employed</b>	53	60	63	64	66	66
Working full-time	—	44	46	45	46	47
Working part-time	—	16	17	19	19	19
<b>Age of youngest child</b>						
<b>Under age 3</b>	37	47	50	52	54	55
Working full-time	—	32	34	34	35	36
Working part-time	—	15	16	18	19	19
<b>Ages 3-5</b>	50	57	61	60	62	63
Working full-time	—	40	43	41	42	43
Working part-time	—	17	18	19	20	20
<b>Ages 6-17</b>	60	70	70	72	73	74
Working full-time	—	53	53	53	53	55
Working part-time	—	17	17	19	19	19
<b>Marital status</b>						
<b>Married, spouse</b>						
<b>presently employed</b>	62	63	66	67	67	68
Working full-time	—	43	44	45	45	46
Working part-time	—	19	19	21	22	21
<b>Never married</b>	40	45	46	48	48	49
Working full-time	—	32	36	34	35	35
Working part-time	—	8	9	12	13	14
<b>Divorced</b>	75	75	74	77	77	79
Working full-time	—	66	66	63	64	66
Working part-time	—	9	9	11	13	13
<b>Race and Hispanic origin<sup>b</sup></b>						
<b>White</b>	52	62	63	65	67	67
Working full-time	—	44	44	45	46	47
Working part-time	—	18	19	20	21	21
<b>Black</b>	54	56	61	58	62	63
Working full-time	—	48	53	47	50	52
Working part-time	—	8	8	11	11	10
<b>Hispanic</b>	42	49	50	48	49	49
Working full-time	—	38	39	36	37	37
Working part-time	—	11	11	12	12	12

<sup>a</sup>Percentages for 1980 are not presented separately by marital status and full-time vs. part-time due to incompatibilities with definitions used in later years. Sums may not add to totals due to rounding.

<sup>b</sup>Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Estimates for whites and blacks include persons of Hispanic origin.

Source: Unpublished tables, Bureau of Labor Statistics, based on analyses of March Current Population Surveys for 1980, 1988, 1990, 1994-1996.

Table ES 3.2.B

Number (in thousands) and percentage of employed mothers in the United States who worked full-time, by age of youngest child, marital status, and race and Hispanic origin:<sup>a</sup> 1996

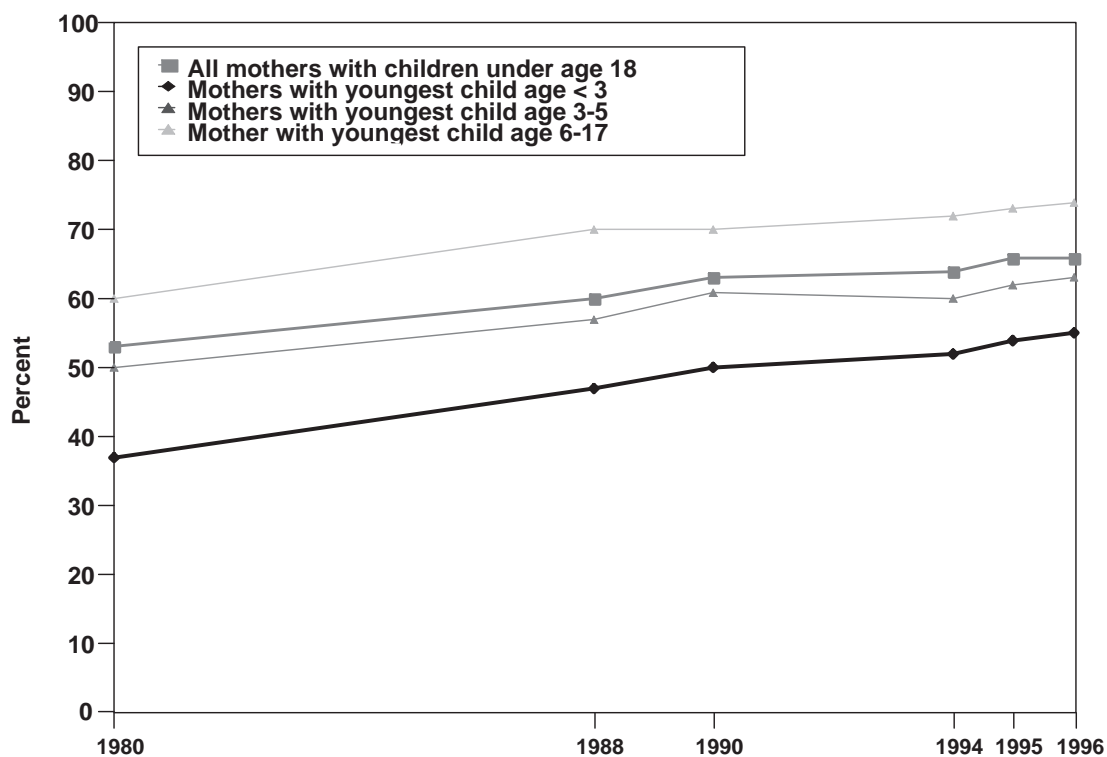
	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Percent Full-time
<b>All mothers</b>	16,712	6,673	23,386	71
<b>Age of youngest child</b>				
Under age 3	3,431	1,791	5,222	66
Ages 3-5	3,007	1,363	4,370	69
Ages 6-17	10,274	3,519	13,794	74
<b>Marital status</b>				
Married	11,737	5,398	17,136	68
Never married	1,317	512	1,829	72
Divorced	2,420	460	2,880	84
<b>Race and Hispanic origin<sup>a</sup></b>				
White	13,246	5,918	19,164	69
Black	2,644	525	3,170	83
Hispanic	1,654	523	2,177	76

<sup>a</sup>Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Estimates for whites and blacks include persons of Hispanic origin.

Source: Unpublished tables, Bureau of Labor Statistics, based on analysis of March Current Population Survey for 1996.

Figure ES 3.2.A

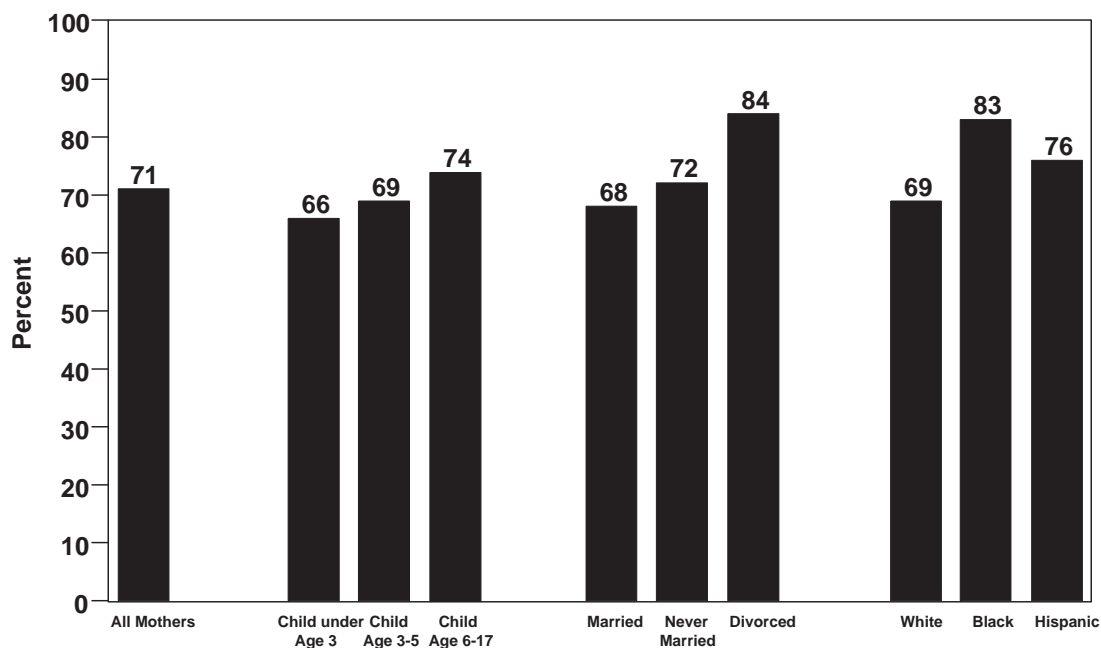
Percentage of mothers in the United States with children under age 18 who were employed, by age of youngest child: selected years, 1980-1996



Source: Unpublished tables, Bureau of Labor Statistics, based on analyses of March Current Population Surveys for 1980, 1988, 1990, 1994-1996.

Figure ES 3.2.B

Percentage of employed mothers in the United States who worked full-time, by age of youngest child, marital status, and race and Hispanic origin:<sup>a</sup> 1996



<sup>a</sup>Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Estimates for whites and blacks include persons of Hispanic origin.

Source: Unpublished tables, Bureau of Labor Statistics, based on analyses of March Current Population Surveys for 1980, 1988, 1990, 1994-1996.